



State Capitol
Lansing, Michigan 48913
517/373-7888
1-888-937-4453
517/373-2983 (fax)
sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov

GILDA Z. JACOBS
MICHIGAN SENATE
ASSISTANT DEMOCRATIC FLOOR LEADER
FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

Committees
Economic Development, Small
Business and Regulatory Reform VC
Families and Human Services VC
Government Operations
Health Policy

The Jacobs Report

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CONTACT: Matt Levin
(517) 373-7888

A CALIFORNIA-LIKE ENERGY CRISIS?

Fueled by heavy financial backing from Detroit Edison, Citizens for Long-Term Energy Affordability and Reliability (CLEAR) have heavily advertised a message urging constituents to push the Granholm administration and the Legislature to re-examine PA 141 of 2000. The group, which announced last week that it had grown to more than 10,000 members, has also inundated elective offices with a series of form letters urging officials to act quickly in order to avoid "a California-like" energy crisis.

Yet, it's difficult to find any similarity between PA 141 and the California energy policy that required utilities to divest of their generating plants and buy energy only on short-term markets. In other words, California utilities were forced to rid themselves of generation capabilities. There is no similar policy in Michigan.

Is CLEAR's claim that "Michigan could face a California-like energy crisis" way off base?

"They're comparing apples to oranges, said Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) Chair Peter Lark.

The Senate Committee on Energy and Technology, Chaired by Sen. Bruce Patterson (R-Canton), recently held public hearings on Public Act 141. The MPSC contributed a report and some testimony during the process, stating that no legislative action is needed. When asked directly what he thought of the CLEAR coalition's advertising blitz, Lark said, "As to the likelihood that Michigan will fall prey to the same problems they experienced in California, I would respectfully disagree."

Nonetheless, CLEAR's \$2 million advertising campaign blitz continues to run on television and in pop-up ads on the Internet, piquing concerns of an already wary public.

HOUSE DEFEATS DEATH PENALTY

Thursday's 55-52 vote on House Resolution W was 18 votes shy of the constitutionally required 73 needed to send the measure to the Senate. As with all legislation seeking ballot placement, a two-thirds majority of both legislative chambers was required.

Supporters of the death penalty, led by the families of recently slain Detroit police officers

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Matthew Bowens and Jennifer Fettig, vowed to collect the necessary 317,757 valid signatures to place a narrower version of HJR resolution on the November ballot.

Referring to House members, Kathy Fettig, Jennifer Fettig's mother, said, "They're wimps. They're afraid to let the people decide."

James Bowens, Matthew Bowens' father, expressed similar sentiment. "The politicians better listen to the people," he warned, promising to gather enough signatures to place a similar proposal on the November ballot.

The slim majority vote represented a huge improvement from an open voting board (informal and unrecorded) on the proposal in 1999 that netted approximately 25 less votes. Proponents and opponents alike credited Rep. Larry Julian, the resolution's primary sponsor, for narrowing the margin.

Prior to the vote, an amendment proposed by Rep. Leon Drolet (R-Clinton Twp.) was adopted to change the standard for a death sentence from "moral certainty" to "absolute certainty."

"Everyone knows I'm somewhat a critic of government," Drolet said. "When this resolution was first introduced, I told the sponsor I could not support it." With the language change, Mr. Drolet was comfortable supporting the measure.

Rep. Bill McConico (D-Detroit) remained steadfast in his opposition. "No one deserves to bury a loved one," he said. "But to institute the death penalty does not bring back the loved one."

The vote tally fell mostly along party lines, with four Democrats casting 'yes' votes and eleven Republicans voting 'no.'

JACOBS: CHILD SEX-ABUSERS WILL SEE THEIR DAY IN COURT

Senate Bill 1030, introduced last week by Sen. Gilda Z. Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods), would eliminate the period of limitations applying to a victim's action to recover damages for a personal injury sustained from criminal sexual conduct. "Sexual conduct" is defined in the bill as sexual penetration or sexual contact with a minor victim by a person of authority over the victim.

Current Michigan law provides a two-year statute of limitations after the incident, plus an additional year after the victim reaches the age of majority.

"This legislation recognizes the human need for psychological healing, therapy and counseling," Jacobs said. "A person needs time in order to make an accurate assessment of the crime's long-term effects. Several recent high-profile cases demonstrated the need for extending the time necessary to prepare to come forward.

"My co-sponsors and I are hopeful that this legislation will reduce victims' trauma by allowing adequate time to heal before legal remedies expire."

The bill has been referred to the Judiciary Committee for consideration.

TOP FIVE ISSUES OF THE WEEK (as tabulated from e-mails, letters and telephone calls)

1. PA 141

Update: Please see above article.

2. Governor's Health Care Budget

Widespread support for avoiding cuts..

3. Sin Tax Increase

Most constituents are in support of the proposal. Speaker Johnson went on record supporting an 81 cent cigarette tax increase—six cents higher than the governor's proposal.

4. Proof of Insurance Violation Fees

A remedy is in the works.

5. Sex Ed

A vast majority of respondents voice opposition to the GOP abstinence plan.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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